



## Family Handbook

**Hours of Operation: 6:00 am – 6:00pm, Monday-Friday**

**Ph: (309) 343-3014 | Fax: (309) 343-3015**

**Email: [directorlcgsara@gmail.com](mailto:directorlcgsara@gmail.com)**

**Facebook: Learning Connections of Galesburg**

Welcome to Learning Connections of Galesburg!

We are excited to get to know you and your family. Our Galesburg site is one of three Learning Connections early education centers in Illinois. The mission of the Learning Connections Corporation is to provide the highest quality early learning for children in our area while operating a cutting edge not for profit organization which will improve the overall lives and learning outcomes of each and every student attending.

This handbook includes information specific to our Galesburg site (referred to as LCG throughout this handbook.) It is an excellent guide to our policies, procedures and overall program operations. Please take time to review this handbook. Store it in a handy location in the event you need it for future reference. If you do not understand or have questions about any of the information in the handbook, please stop by, call or email the office for clarification.

We are honored you have chosen to trust us with your child's care and early education and we look forward to partnering with you.

## **Philosophy**

We believe children are unique individuals with diverse needs and abilities who respond to active learning. With ample time and opportunity to explore materials and concepts, confident, eager learners emerge. Opportunities to interact safely, in both indoor and outdoor learning environments, will help each child interact more responsibly and successfully in future endeavors. Because we respect families as a child's first teachers, we will form a strong partnership with each family, in an effort to provide the most educationally rich environment possible. We are a Christian based facility and believe in modeling character traits such as love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, gentleness, faithfulness, and self-control.

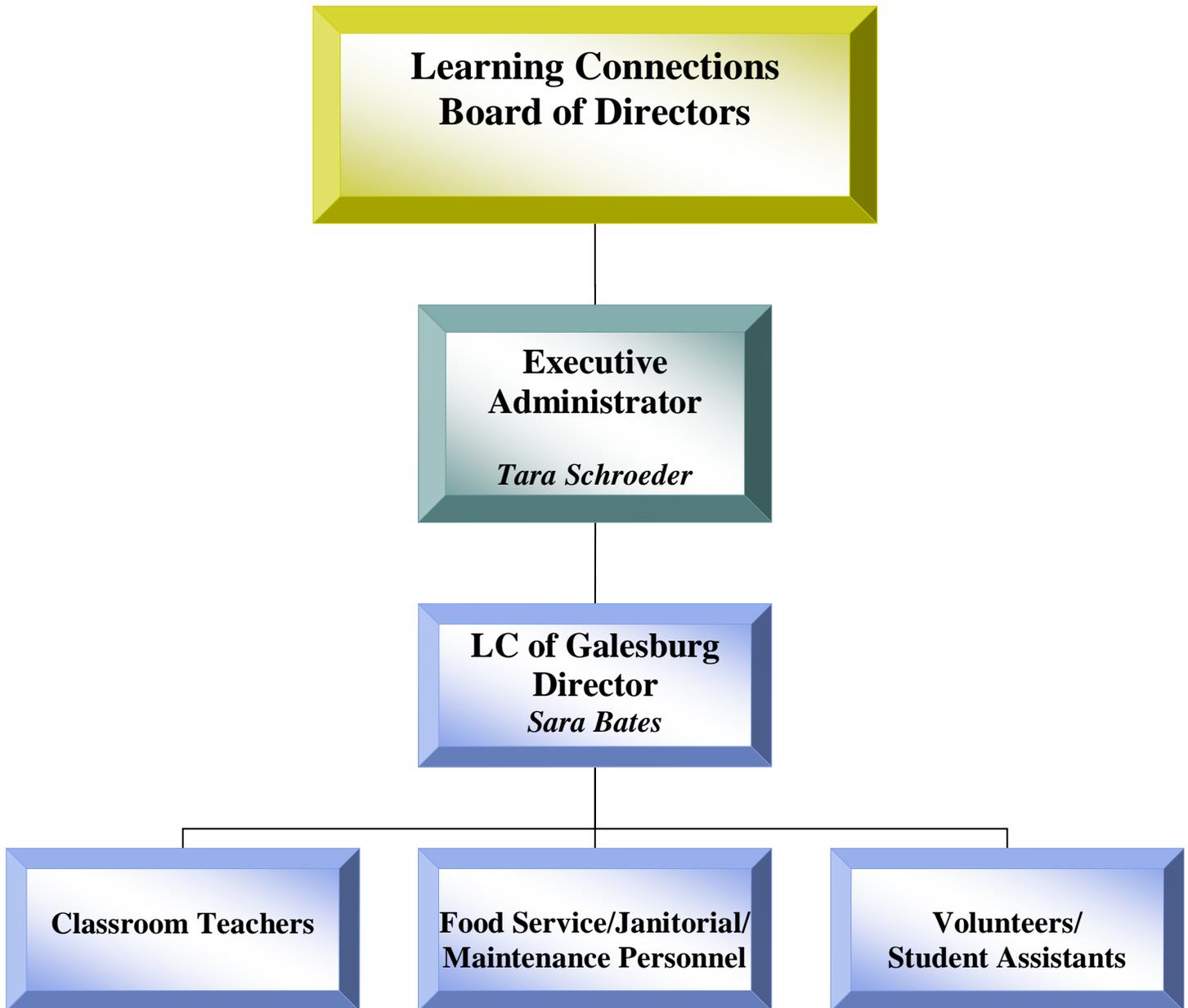
## **Mission**

LCG will provide a safe, nurturing environment with opportunities that promote confidence and inspire creativity while respecting each learner's unique needs. Specifically, our goals are:

- ◆ to meet the childcare needs of our community while offering a premier early childhood education;
- ◆ to provide opportunities for families to grow in the understanding of child development and parenting skills;
- ◆ to contribute to the wholesome growth and development of the future citizens of our community;
- ◆ to form meaningful and productive partnerships with community organizations including the local school district, higher education institutions, social service agencies and other community venues;
- ◆ to provide opportunities for staff to learn and grow as professionals; and
- ◆ to serve as a model for others interested in establishing a quality early education program.

## Organizational Structure

A view of the Learning Connections of Galesburg organizational structure is displayed below.



In the event that the director is not on site, a “person-in-charge” will be identified according to the list posted outside the office. When the director is visiting classrooms or otherwise not in her office, there will be a sign on the door regarding where to find her or the designated “person in charge.”

## Hours of Operation/Calendar

Services are available Monday through Friday from 6:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.

We are CLOSED on the following days:

- Good Friday
- Memorial Day
- Independence Day
- Labor Day
- Thanksgiving Day and the following Friday

In addition, **the center is CLOSED beginning on December 24 and opens again on January 2 each year.**

One professional development day will be planned for staff training and meetings in August of each year.

Ample advance notice will be provided so you may plan for alternate childcare on this date.

Your weekly childcare tuition has been figured to include credit for these closings. Therefore, your weekly childcare tuition rate will not change as these dates occur throughout the school year. (No credit will be applied to accounts for days closed throughout the year.)

### **Emergency/Weather Related Closings:**

From time to time, it may be necessary to close or adjust our hours of operation due to weather or other unforeseen emergencies. Every effort will be made to provide ample notice and announcement of such changes. Such announcements will be reported to the following television/radio stations:

WGIL AM 1400  
FM95 (94.9)  
The LASER 92.7  
KFM 105.3

WQAD-TV Channel 8  
WHBF-TV Channel 4  
KWQC-TV Channel 6

If inclement weather develops during the hours a child is in care, families are expected to pick up their child within *one hour* of the closing announcement. For this reason, we ask that you keep current schedules and means of contact including cell numbers, email addresses and alternate emergency contacts up to date. Notify the office anytime key contact people will not be at their normal location.

## Enrollment

A waiting list for childcare is maintained by the program director. When an opening occurs, the waiting list is reviewed for a family whose needs match the opening. The family that matches and is next “in line” is contacted and given two business days to accept or decline. If the opening is declined, the child’s name will remain on the list with no guarantee as to the next available opening. We will make every effort to accommodate each family’s needs in a timely manner.

When an opening occurs that matches a family’s needs, a contract for childcare will be completed and a **non-refundable registration fee** will be charged. At this time, we will complete a Family Orientation which includes a tour of the school, an overview of our policies and procedures, a discussion about goals for your family, the enrollment packet of all required paperwork and other information. Enrollment will not be considered complete until all the necessary forms have been received. Childcare will not be provided until enrollment is complete.

Families new to our program need to schedule at least one visiting time for the child prior to the enrollment date. This first visit can be a short one and includes a discussion of the new environment, introductions to teachers and the family’s observation of all the new things the child will be able to experience. A second visit can be planned to include the child interacting with teachers and children, as well as, the materials, equipment and activities available. Often families choose to watch their child interact from the classroom observation windows for this visit.

Families enrolled at LCG during any given session have the first opportunity to contract for future sessions. Currently enrolled families are also given priority for sibling enrollment.

As part of the enrollment process, families complete a Denver II Developmental Screening Questionnaire and authorize permission to teachers to complete the developmental screening. The screening tool allows us to gather your child’s unique developmental information which we will use to create lesson plans, individual portfolios, and referrals to any outside services that may be useful to optimizing your child’s development. The screening will be conducted within one month of enrollment and all results will be shared with you.

Children with previously identified special needs are enrolled based on our ability to meet their needs in the context of a large group environment. Families will be asked to share professional evaluations during the enrollment process to determine how best to meet the needs of the child.

LCG does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, creed, religion, sex, age, disability, national origin, veteran’s status, or marital status. According to Illinois Licensing Standards, “Any child who, after attempts have been made to meet the child’s individual needs, demonstrates inability to benefit from the type of care offered by the facility, or whose presence is detrimental to the group, shall be discharged from the facility.” If a child is unable to have his/her needs adequately met by LCG, the Director will work with the family to seek alternative programs or placements for the child. All attempts will be made to serve any child enrolled, but it is imperative that families understand the scope of a group setting versus one-on-one education and care.

## **Family Participation and Supports**

We believe families are important! Parents-or those adults a child lives with- are truly the child's first teachers. Quality early childhood education includes families and teachers forming strong partnerships as they support the young child's development. Families are welcome visitors to the program at all times. You are invited and encouraged to attend events, meetings and to participate in field trips, class projects, and celebrations whenever possible. Please let us know if you would like to be counted for lunch or join us for a snack. Other ideas for involvement include simple interactions within the classroom, reading a story, sharing a favorite hobby, conducting a cooking experience, or sharing information about your job. Social functions may be held throughout the school year. They are a great way to meet other families and to speak with staff outside of the classroom. We may even ask for volunteers to help plan or host events. Please consider supporting your child's early education by participating in this way.

Take advantage of communicating during drop off and pick up times. These are prime times to offer a quick overview of your morning and/or get a quick rundown of your child's day. Formal family and teacher conferences are offered in December and May each year. However, we are happy to schedule a meeting at other times in order to speak at length and in detail regarding a specific issue. Please call or stop by the office to schedule a meeting. We will do our best to accommodate your availability. The director is always available to discuss any concerns or needs that you may have. Please do not hesitate to bring matters to the attention of the director.

There are many events in the life of your family that may have a positive or negative effect on your child. We can respond and accommodate changes in your child's needs and behavior if we are kept informed about them. Biblio-therapy kits are available for check out in the office. Each kit includes books, activities, and props related to a specific topic your family may be dealing with. Topics available include death (of a person or pet,) divorce, biting, anger, adoption, moving, fire safety, going to the doctor/dentist, potty training, sharing, night terrors, beginning Spanish, self-esteem, a new baby, birthdays, and more. Additional family resources are located in our library. Books, articles, and videos are available for checkout. Stop by the office if you are interested in something specific or would just like to browse our resources.

We encourage you to include us when you consider making charitable donations. We appreciate and can also recycle household and business discards in many creative ways.

### **Confidentiality and Appropriate Conduct**

Staff affiliated with LCG are required to maintain complete family confidentiality and respect privacy at all times. We ask that families show each other the same courtesy. At times, we seek assistance from outside agencies to help us better understand specific developmental issues. If such an incidence occurs, it may be necessary to share information. You will be asked to sign a form providing consent to share information before your family's personal information will be shared with anyone other than the child's primary and secondary contacts.

## Curriculum Basics

LCG utilizes Creative Curriculum and an assessment tool, Teaching Strategies Gold, as a framework for providing planned experiences in each age group served. Our curriculum emphasizes the process of learning and it encourages both children and adults to initiate learning experiences. It supports the idea that children construct their own understanding of the world through active involvement with materials, people and ideas. Our classroom arrangement, daily routines, portfolio-style record keeping and planned family involvement work together to support the following educational and developmental goals that we have for young children:

- ◆ to develop children's ability to make decisions about what they are going to do and how they are going to do it
- ◆ to develop children's self-discipline and their ability to identify personal goals so they can pursue and complete self-chosen tasks
- ◆ to develop children's ability to work with other children and adults so that the work done is a result of group planning, cooperative effort and shared leadership
- ◆ to develop children's ability for self-expression – enabling them to speak, write, dramatize and graphically represent their experiences and to communicate these experiences to others
- ◆ to develop children's ability to apply their reasoning capacity in a wide range of naturally occurring situations, using a variety of materials
- ◆ to develop children's spirit of inquiry and of openness to knowledge and the points of view of other people

Teachers use observation of children's interests and abilities to plan project based learning experiences. These projects support development in all of the key experience areas and utilize the plan-do-review process. Families are always encouraged to contribute by sharing information or hands-on experiences as they relate to each project.

Families are also encouraged to share the goals they have for their child as he/she grows and develops. You are asked to submit goals and an overall evaluation of the program each semester. However, daily communication between teachers and families aids in planning experiences to support the goals you have for your child. Teachers maintain a portfolio for each child containing anecdotal observations of his/her work, work samples, photos that document his/her activities, and other pertinent documents that reflect his/her developmental progress.

Formal family/teacher conferences are held at the end of the fall and spring semesters or more often as needed. You are welcome to review your child's portfolio at anytime, and are encouraged to share your observations. Your input is valuable and aids teachers in completing portfolios.

## **Health and Safety**

The health policy of our program has been formulated for the purpose of safeguarding the health and safety of all who participate. It also reflects the requirements of Illinois Licensing Standards. General physicals and proof of a TB test are required for all staff. Any adult experiencing fever, sore throat, vomiting, diarrhea, or any communicable disease will not be responsible for food handling or have direct contact with children.

### **Children's Physical Examinations and Immunizations**

Each child is required to provide evidence of a physical examination (within the last six months preceding enrollment,) current immunizations, lead test, and TB test. School-age children must have a copy of the most recent regularly scheduled school physical. Immunizations must include those required by the Illinois Department of Public Health. **Physicals are to be turned in on or before the first day the child begins attending.** These are valid for two years with the exception of school-age physicals which must be provided as they are required for local school entry. The office will maintain a list of any children who are not immunized due to religious grounds or medical reasons. The number of children included shall be available to parents who request it.

Illinois Licensing Standards have very specific directions regarding hand washing. Please note our hand washing posters and be a model for your child. Each child needs to wash their hands upon arrival at the center and benefit from seeing adults doing the same with them.

### **Hand-Washing Technique:**

1. Wet hands under warm running water.
2. Lather both hands and scrub vigorously for at least 15 seconds (Sing the Alphabet Song.)
3. Rinse hands thoroughly under warm running water.
4. Dry both hands with a new single-use towel or automatic dryer\*.
5. For hand-held faucets, turn off the water using a disposable towel instead of bare hands to avoid recontamination of clean hands.

\*Infants and toddlers may not use automatic dryers

### **Hand Washing Times:**

- ◆ Upon arrival at the center
- ◆ Before and after each meal or snack
- ◆ After using the bathroom or helping a child use the bathroom
- ◆ After using the bathroom or having diapers changed
- ◆ After changing diapers\*
- ◆ After wiping or blowing his/her nose or helping someone else do the same
- ◆ After touching items soiled with body fluids or wastes
- ◆ After handling pets or other animals
- ◆ After handling or caring for a sick child
- ◆ Before and after any cooking experiences
- ◆ Before preparing, handling, or serving food
- ◆ Before and after eating and drinking
- ◆ Before and after using the water table
- ◆ Before dispensing or handling any medications
- ◆ Before and after administering first aid
- ◆ When changing rooms or caring for a different group of children

\*Please also note our posted diaper changing procedures in the Infant & Toddler classrooms.

Personal hygiene is a part of early childhood education. Please make time to bathe your child daily and send him/her to school in clean play clothes. Teachers will assist them with learning self-help skills and how to wash themselves as needed at school.

## Daily Health Check

Teachers will visually screen children upon arrival daily for any signs of illness. **If symptoms of illness are present, we will determine whether we are able to care for your child safely, based on the apparent degree of illness.** Exclusion from childcare is *required* if the any of the following exist:

<b>Symptom:</b>	<b>Childcare can resume:</b>
<b>Illness/symptoms that prevent the child from participating comfortably</b> in program activities or that calls for greater care than the staff can provide without compromising the health and safety of other children. This may include unusual lethargy, irritability, persistent crying, difficulty breathing or other signs of possible severe illness.	When child can participate in regular daily routines (including outdoor activities) without constant one on one care from a teacher. *If child is sent home twice in a row, a physician's note stating child is non-contagious and healthy enough to return to care must be provided.
<b>Fever</b> (Infants 4 months and younger: rectal/temporal temperature of 101 or higher, under the arm temperature of 100 or higher Children 4 months and older: rectal/temporal temperature of 102 or higher, oral temperature of 101 or higher, under the arm temperature of 100 or higher)	When child's temperature is lower than the indicated guidelines for 24 hours <i>without</i> the use of fever reducing medication.
<b>Vomiting</b> <i>Exclusion occurs when vomiting wasn't induced by coughing, swallowing without chewing, or any other non-contagious factor recognized by the teacher.</i>	When vomiting has subsided for 24 hours. May return with a physician's note if determined non-contagious and child is not in danger of dehydration.
<b>Diarrhea</b> (uncontrollable loose stools with increased water content which cannot be contained within the diaper or underwear)	When diarrhea has subsided. *We recommend exclusion for 24 hours. We will call you to pick up your child at the first instance of loose stools upon his/her return.
<b>Purulent conjunctivitis</b> (pink or red conjunctiva with white or yellow drainage often causing matted eyelids after sleep, discomfort of the eyes and redness of the skin around the eye)	Twenty four hours after treatment has been initiated. May return with a physician's note if determined non-contagious.
<b>Rash with behavior change</b> (such as discomfort which causes scratching or repeated touching of the affected area)	When skin is clear and no evidence of rash remains. May return with a physician's note if determined non-contagious.
<b>Mouth sores</b> which cause inability to control saliva	When sores are gone. May return with a physician's note if determined non-contagious.
<b>Head lice</b>	Twenty four hours after the first treatment.
<b>Impetigo</b>	Twenty four hours after treatment has been initiated.
<b>Strep throat (streptococcal pharyngitis)</b>	Twenty four hours after treatment has been initiated.
<b>Scabies</b>	The morning after the first treatment.
<b>Chicken pox (varicella)</b>	At least 6 days after onset of rash.
<b>Whooping cough (pertussis)</b>	After 5 days of antibiotic treatment have been completed.
<b>Mumps</b>	Nine days after onset of parotid gland swelling.
<b>Measles</b>	Four days after disappearance of the rash.

Children who develop any of the described symptoms while at school will be isolated as much as possible in a separate area. Parents or other emergency contacts will be immediately notified and expected to pick up the child within **one hour** of the notification. If a child is exposed to, or contracts, a communicable disease while not in care, it is essential that this information be reported to LCG. Information of possible exposure to communicable disease will be posted in the classroom(s) involved.

Please **be considerate** of the other families at school. Acknowledge our policies and **refrain from bringing your child to school** if he/she exhibits symptoms of short-term, contagious diseases which can be transmitted through casual contact (fever, vomiting, diarrhea, sore throat, frequent cough, heavily running nose, frequent sneezing, etc.) **during the 24-hour period prior** to scheduled attendance. **Please call LCG anytime your child is absent due to illness.**

Parents of a child who has a medical diagnosis by a physician as having a life-threatening disease are expected to notify us that such a condition exists. We will work with you to determine whether your child is well enough to be in group child care, poses no significant risk to others and that we can meet the needs of your child. A child's right to privacy will be respected.

### **Medications**

Medications should be administered at home whenever possible. If necessary, medications can be administered at LCG if you provide a dispenser and fill out the medication consent form at the office. Both prescription medication and over-the-counter medication shall be accepted only in its original container. Prescription medications shall be labeled with a full pharmacy label and will only be administered as required by a physician. Over-the-counter medications may only be dispensed in accordance with manufacturer's instructions and must be in such condition that the title of the medication and the directions for use are clearly readable. Staff will not administer the initial dosage of a medication except with physician's written permission for life-threatening situations. Medication will not be administered if it is beyond the date of expiration. All medications, whether refrigerated or unrefrigerated, are kept in locked containers that are inaccessible to children and that are designated and used only for this purpose. Unused medication will not be stored at school beyond the end date noted on the consent form.

### **Accidents**

The staff at LCG take all possible precautions to prevent accidents and injuries. Accidents/incidents requiring first aid are recorded on Incident Report Forms which describe the nature of the incident and any first aid provided. The forms are signed by person picking up the child and stored in your child's file. In the event of a major accident, you (or other designated emergency contacts) will be notified immediately. It is vital that your contact information be accurate and up-to-date each session. In the event of an accident requiring medical care, the Department of Children and Family Services is contacted as well. A statement signed by the physician attending the child, describing the nature and the extent of injury will be kept on file. You will be expected to assume responsibility for any resultant expense not covered by our insurance. We strongly urge you to check with your insurance company to determine what type of coverage they will provide if your child is injured while at school.

## Discipline

Discipline is a way of guiding and interacting with children that enables them to become responsible individuals. Our goal is to help children develop self-control within an atmosphere of mutual respect. We want children to maintain a sense of high self-esteem as they learn to become independent, caring people. We encourage and model pro-social behaviors such as cooperating, helping, taking turns, and solving problems by talking about feelings and ideas. By being alert and perceptive, we can redirect children's activities before problems arise. Children should experience logical/natural consequences for their behavior and assume responsibility for their own actions. It may be necessary to remove a child from a situation if his/her safety or the safety of others is an issue. If removed, an adult will help the child gain control and discuss solutions to the problem. We believe that an environment of consistent, but gentle, firmness will enable children to feel good about themselves and others.

Children shall not be disciplined for toilet accidents and the following will not be permitted at any time:

- corporal punishment, including hitting, spanking, swatting, beating, shaking, pinching and other measures intended to induce physical pain or fear;
- threatened or actual withdrawal of food, rest, or use of the bathroom;
- abusive or profane language;
- any form of public or private humiliation, including threats of physical punishment;
- any form of emotional abuse including shaming, rejecting, terrorizing, or isolating a child.

Suspected child abuse or neglect shall be reported immediately to the Child Abuse/Neglect Hotline as required by the Abused and Neglected Child Reporting Act. All employees, student assistants, and volunteers are Mandated Reporters. Any employee, student, volunteer or family member who has concerns regarding suspected child abuse or neglect is asked to see the director immediately. Report hotline: 1-800-252-2873.

### **Conflict Resolution**

Preschool and school-age children are encouraged to learn how to resolve their own conflicts. Teachers use the following steps when resolving conflicts. Practice this approach to help with problem solving at home, too!

1. **Approach calmly**, stopping any hurtful actions.  
Place yourself between the children, on their level.  
Use a calm voice and a gentle touch.  
Remain neutral rather than take sides.
2. **Acknowledge children's feelings**....."You look really upset."
3. **Gather information**....."What's the problem?"
4. **Restate the problem**....."So the problem is...."  
Ask for ideas for solutions and choose one together....."What can we do to solve this problem?"  
Encourage children to think of a solution.
5. Be prepared to **give follow-up support**....."You solved the problem!" Stay near the children.

### **Classroom Rules**

Each classroom has a set of rules developed by the teachers and children. They are written in a positive manner to help the children focus on acceptable behavior patterns. In general, everyone at LCG is asked to treat others as they would like to be treated and to care for their classrooms as they would their own rooms at home. You will confuse your child by allowing him/her to break classroom rules while arriving or departing. Familiarize yourself with the classroom rules and help your child follow them.

## Arrival and Departure

The last five digits of your social security number will be used as a positive identifier for tracking drop off and pick up in our software program. Sign in on the computer at the main desk upon arrival. Please accompany your child to the restroom and help with his/her hand washing after signing in. Infants, toddlers and even older children who have never experienced group settings typically have “separation anxiety” for one or more weeks. This sometimes occurs immediately or it may be delayed and occur after the “newness” of school wears off. It might be helpful to bring a child’s favorite soft toy, blanket or “comfort” item from home. It is best if you keep farewells short and honest; i.e. “I love you and I have to go to work. It is your job to be at school and work with your teachers. I will be back at ..... to pick you up.” Prolonging a good-bye is difficult for everyone involved.

Sign your child out on the computer at the main desk when picking up. If you know you are going to be detained, please notify us as soon as possible so that we can reassure your child. A child will be released from the school **only** to the child’s parents, guardians or to a person designated in writing by the parents or guardians on the emergency form. It is your responsibility to keep the authorized list of people allowed to pick up current and accurate. Persons not familiar to the staff will be required to provide photo identification to establish their identity prior to having a child released to them. A signature is required on the clipboard sign in/out sheet by the person picking up the child.

Children will **not** be released from the school if an authorized person arrives and appears, in the judgment of staff, to be intoxicated or under the influence of drugs. The director will contact another authorized pick up person from the child’s emergency form.

IL Licensing Standards state that all child care centers shall have a written policy which explains actions that will be taken if a parent or guardian does not retrieve, or arrange to have someone retrieve, their child at the designated agreed upon time per the semester contract. LCG policy follows:

### **Children still in our care at 6:00 p.m. will:**

1. Remain with a responsible staff member. The staff member will provide the child with books, puzzles, markers or another activity to work on while waiting.
2. Additionally, the staff member will immediately try to reach the primary contact person according to the information provided on the most recent emergency form. If the parent/guardian cannot be reached within ten minutes, the staff member will begin calling the emergency numbers in the order provided on the emergency form. Any emergency contact reached will be requested to pick up the child within thirty minutes.
3. The person picking up the child will be charged a late fee of \$15.00 for every **5 minutes** they are late.
4. If after *one hour* the child remains in our care, the Knox County Sheriff’s Office will be notified, and the child will be placed in the custody of the Illinois Department of Children and Family Services.
5. The child is **NOT** held responsible for the situation, and the issue will only be discussed with the parent/guardian.
6. Families who are repeatedly late for pick-up will be asked to remove their child from the program.

You are expected to notify LCG anytime your child is not attending according to his/her contracted schedule. Childcare used outside of your contracted schedule may result in additional charges! We are required to maintain safe adult-child ratios and must know in advance when each child will attend.

## **Food Service**

LCG participates in the Child and Adult Care Food Program (CACFP) a federally funded nutrition program which regulates nutrition content, portion size and meal serving times and procedures. We are partially reimbursed for the costs of providing nutritious snacks and well-balanced meals to your child when we follow CACFP menu planning guidelines, keep accurate daily records, and maintain a non-profit food service. The enrollment form for this program is part of your enrollment packet and is required to be on file before your child attends. CACFP enrollment forms are updated annually.

Lunch menus are posted in each classroom and copies are available in the hallway at the Family Information Area. Snack menus vary from week to week. LCG provides a nutritious breakfast and afternoon snacks for all in attendance. Our snacks are intended to supplement rather than replace meals. Servings will be snack sized. Water is available throughout the day. Please be sure that your child arrives at school having enjoyed a fulfilling, healthy breakfast and we will do our best to ensure that they eat a good lunch. It is not necessary for you to send any food to school with your child. If you have concerns about your child's nutritional needs and/or eating habits, please discuss the matter with your child's teachers.

Infants not yet consuming table food will be provided formula and/or baby food according to the choices indicated on the CACFP INFANT FORMULA/FOOD WAIVER NOTIFICATION form. Otherwise, infants and toddlers are served all components listed on the menu. Formula and breast milk bottles from home must be labeled, dated, and refrigerated upon arrival at the center. No food other than formula, milk, breast milk, or water shall be placed in a bottle for feeding unless otherwise indicated by the child's physician.

Meals are served family style after children transition out of the toddler classroom. Dishes are passed around the table and children serve themselves, with assistance. We encourage children to try each food, but we never force them to eat anything they do not want.

Families should not bring food from home unless there is a documented medical reason for the substitution. CACFP provides a PHYSICIAN STATEMENT FOR FOOD SUBSTITUTION form which must be completed in consultation with and signed by the child's physician. LCG will consult with families on an individual basis to determine how to best provide appropriate substitutions. Although we are unable to accommodate individual requests due to food preferences, we do want to ensure that your family's dietary practices are valued. Alternative meals may be requested to respect your family's religious or cultural guidelines, but we cannot guarantee that your child will not decide to sample from our family style meals!

At least one staff member, trained and certified in Food Safety and Sanitation is on the premises anytime food is handled and/or served.

### **Special Occasions**

Families are welcome to bring treats to school for special occasions such as birthdays, but all food items must be store-bought and arrive in sealed packaging. We prefer that you send healthy snacks or simple party favors in lieu of candy or sweets. Ask your child's teacher for suggestions before purchasing expensive cakes or cupcakes that are often wasted by our youngest children. Often, children with severe food allergies are not able to consume edible birthday treats. A much more enjoyable and memorable way to celebrate would be to join us and provide an art project or other type of activity for the class. Please plan celebrations with your child's teacher at least one week in advance. If your child's birthday falls during a time when they do not attend, please feel free to schedule an "un-birthday" celebration.

### **Cooking Experiences**

Each classroom regularly provides cooking and tasting experiences. These activities are not always planned in advance. For this reason, it is important that you keep us informed of any food allergies or other food related issues your child may be experiencing. Very often, we use ingredients from our school garden for our recipes!

## Pest Management/Chemical Treatment Operations

We practice Integrated Pest Management, a program that combines preventative techniques, non-chemical pest control methods, and the appropriate use of pesticides with a preference for products least harmful to human health and the environment. Applications of pesticides are made only when deemed necessary to control a pest problem and after trying other means to control the problem. If pesticide use occurs, you will be notified. At least 24 hour notice will be provided if other special treatments are warranted. This policy is posted in the Family Information Area and a notice will be placed on the center sign-in/sign-out computer screen prior to each *special application* treatment. The director will oversee pest management operations and record keeping.

## Field Trips

Families will receive advance notice of any off site trips and will be required to sign a permission form prior to your child participating. Teachers take their classroom's emergency bag which includes a first aid kit, emergency contact numbers for each child and staff member, and written plans for responding to possible travel emergencies.

The following guidelines are based on Illinois Licensing Standards:

- ◆ All drivers must be approved by the State of Illinois based on the Child Care Facility Driver Eligibility Criteria.
- ◆ Families are required to sign a permission sheet for each trip, in addition to having their signature on file on the child's enrollment form.
- ◆ The driver shall not leave the vehicle unattended at any time while transporting children.
- ◆ The driver shall see that each child boards and exits the vehicle from the curb side of the street and/or is safely conducted across the street. The route shall be planned so that, whenever possible, the child exits on the same side of the street as the child's destination.
- ◆ The driver shall see that order is maintained in the vehicle for the safety of the children in transit.
- ◆ The number of children transported in a vehicle shall not exceed the manufacturer's rated passenger capacity.
- ◆ No more than one child may be in each seat belt and/or designated seat space.
- ◆ The driver shall inspect the vehicle after each use to assure that no child is left in the vehicle.
- ◆ Vehicle doors shall be locked at all times when the vehicle is moving. The doors shall be opened and closed only by the driver or by another designated adult.
- ◆ The driver shall not allow children to stand in a moving vehicle, sit on the floor of a vehicle in use or extend any part of their body through the vehicle windows.

Children are prepared for the trip by reviewing safety rules and discussing the schedule of events. They are reminded of the requirement to keep a teacher in sight at all times. Attendance and head counts are done prior to leaving campus and each time the group is in and out of the vehicle or are in and out of a building. Children are **NOT** allowed to go to the restroom unaccompanied by an adult. At least one adult is required to stand at the rest room door until the child returns.

All children participate in walks and excursions in our school neighborhood. Teachers take an emergency bag and a security radio with them anytime their group leaves the classroom. We make every effort to avoid being away during peak pick-up/drop-off times. There will be a sign on the door indicating your child's location and expected return time if the classroom is empty when you arrive

## Miscellaneous

- Emergency drills are practiced on a regular basis. Refer to the posted emergency area of each classroom for more information.
- NEVER leave an unattended vehicle running our parking lot. NEVER leave a child of any age in a vehicle unattended.
- Each child is required to have an extra set of clothing, including socks and underwear stored at school. These items need to be clearly labeled with your child's name and should be changed to match the seasons throughout the year.
- Children need to wear play clothes to school. Clothes that allow freedom of movement and some soil are recommended. Messy play is also learning play!
- For safety, only closed toe shoes with backs are required. Tennis shoes are preferred. Children need to be able to run and climb safely. Flip flops and open-toed sandals are not allowed at any time.
- All age groups go outside daily, weather permitting. Teachers are responsible for monitoring weather conditions and determining the appropriateness for children's outdoor time. Extreme hot or cold temperatures are taken into consideration and normal outdoor schedules may have to be shortened. Drinking water is available to children at all times. Each child needs weather-appropriate articles for outdoor play including jackets, coats, mittens, hats and boots when necessary. All items need to be labeled.
- Please check your child's cubby daily. Newsletters, personal notes, receipts, artwork, and other important hand-outs are placed in cubbies. Children need to see a family member taking interest in their work. Older classrooms also have individual journals for each child. Please make time to review them and discuss what the child has recorded. What looks like "scribbles" to you may be the child's first attempt at drawing pictures of family members. Ask open-ended questions such as, "What do these lines mean? Can you tell me about the colors you used on this page?" You may be pleasantly surprised as you learn how your child is able to recall experiences both at home and school.
- Children's work is displayed in the classroom and hallways. Allow time at pick-up or drop-off to view it with your child. Help them to find their own name/symbol and then begin looking for other names/symbols they may recognize. This is another excellent way to develop pre-reading skills.
- Personal toys (other than ONE nap buddy) are NOT allowed at school unless teachers announce a special sharing time or event. Personal items can easily be damaged, misplaced, or lost at school. LCG will not be responsible for lost or broken items brought from home.
- Often holidays are celebrated in a "reflective mode" by sharing a holiday with children after the child has experienced it with his/her family. This is supportive of the idea that young children are "concrete, hands-on" learners, not easily understanding abstract ideas until they have actually experienced them personally. Often teachers offer art supplies and seasonally related books as a choice for recalling and recreating experiences from a family celebration. We would love for you to share photos and stories about holidays or celebrations important to your family.
- All classrooms have a "family photo" area. Please be sure to provide at least one favorite family photo or allow us to take a picture of you with your child. Children love to share their family photos with one another as well as tell teachers all about the photo!
- You are encouraged to use the comment cards located in the Family Information Area to make comments or suggestions (even anonymously,) through parent evaluations and questionnaires, by email, telephone, or one-on-one with the Director.

**Thank you for taking time to review this handbook. If you have suggestions or would like clarification about specific policies or procedures, please stop by our office or email Sara at [directorlcsara@gmail.com](mailto:directorlcsara@gmail.com).**